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MISTRESS OF THE SITUATION.

BY JENNIE CHAPPELL, AUTHOR OF "HER SADDEST BLESSING," "BY THE WAY OF THE VALLEY," ETC.

"'You have advertised for a lady-help, I believe.'" *p. 3.*

CHAPTER I.

EXIT ADELAIDE.

ADELAIDE had gone at last. As the hall door closed behind her, and we heard her trunk being trundled down the street on the railway porter's trolley, Edith leaned up against the wall, while I dropped upon the lowest stair, and we simultaneously ejaculated, "Thank goodness!"

It was just eight months since, as a result of a dreadful commercial disaster into the particulars of which I need not enter now, we had been compelled to leave our pleasant home on the banks of the Thames and establish ourselves in a seven-roomed "villa" near Peckham Rye. By "we" I mean our father and our brother Keith, my sister Edith and myself. Our dear mother had been removed some two years previously from the evil to come.

Up to that time our household had been kept in order by four efficient women servants. Mother's health was delicate, and she took little active part in the direction of affairs, nearly everything being left to the management of good Mrs. Bidwell, the cook, who had been in our family for about fifteen years. This worthy woman, than whom a more discreet and faithful never lived, held somewhat strict notions, now fast becoming out-of-date, as to the propriety of "young ladies" knowing anything whatever about domestic matters. As children we had never been allowed to set foot upon the kitchen stairs; as we grew up neither of us developed the slightest natural leanings towards housewifery, and we were never tempted to forsake our art work and etching, our violin playing and amateur photography for any inquiries into the best methods of cleaning silver or the constituent parts of an omelette. The difficulties of our position—nay, the blank bewilderment, the helpless dismay with which we found ourselves doomed to keep house with the assistance of one cheap "general," may be imagined.

It is sometimes asserted that men-folk are, one and all, weakly impatient of every form of discomfort, especially that arising from the disappointment of their gastronomic tastes. If that be true, all I can say is that father and Keith stand out with but the greater lustre from the multitude, for the way they bore the various miseries they were condemned to endure during the early days at Peckham Rye was just *sweet!* I must say it, though Keith can't bear me to, and if it gets into print, I can't help it. He will only give me a wicked look out of those dark eyes of his, and say, as he always does, that if he hadn't "kicked up a bit of a rumpus" the day I boiled his favourite "half-pay" pudding in a saucepan that smelt strongly of yesterday's cod, he should have developed a halo of saintship too big to admit of his entering an omnibus!

But if misery, *minus* resignation, could produce saints, I'm sure Edith and I too ought now to be wearing halos of the first magnitude for what we went through with those "generals." We had five in the eight months. The first was Rose. She was not a bad girl for work, but her impertinent manners were more than Edith could bear, so we let her go at the end of the month. Emma, the second, was the essence of politeness, and took Edith's heart by storm. Our every behest was met with a cheerful "Yes, miss; certainly, miss; thank you!" most soothing to the dignity left in so wounded a condition by her predecessor. But it was a serious drawback to find, by experience, that with her, as with the courteous son of Scripture, it was a case of "'I go, sir,' and went not." Emma never once shook up the beds, or swept out the corners of the stairs, or dusted the hat-stand during the eight weeks that she was with us. Blanche contrived to combine the undesirable qualities of both Emma and Rose without a redeeming point; she remained with us but eleven days. In Annie we fondly hoped that we had at last discovered pure gold, but, as Keith says, "she turned out to be a 'smasher' after all." This was true both literally and figuratively. She demolished, on an average, three pieces of glass or chinaware per week; but I think we might have borne with this had we not discovered that our neat, industrious, capable maid was systematically robbing us in every possible way! She departed at an hour's notice; and after her came Adelaide.

Adelaide! What memories does that name recall! She stayed beneath our roof but three-quarters of a month, yet mementoes of that brief but troubled time remain with us to this day. My cherished cream-coloured ostrich tips, for instance, relics of more affluent days, have never looked the same since she wore them the afternoon Edith and I went to visit some friends across London, and got them draggled in the rain; while the mark where she upset her blacklead things on our white sheepskin rug, and the clearly defined impression of her large, dirty thumb on the pages of my crocodile-bound Tennyson, will be present evermore. But Adelaide's sojourn with us is rendered memorable by the blanks that occurred among our household possessions at that period no less than by the souvenirs which abide. During her reign in the kitchen three silver spoons went astray, and ditto our pearl-handled butter-knife. Edith's solitary lace-edged handkerchief disappeared during the same period, also an old-fashioned coral bracelet—a keepsake—and several pairs of gloves.

But that was nothing! Adelaide "walked out," more or less, with three different young men in the course of that eventful month, and supplied them all with refreshment from our poor little larder. When we expostulated, Adelaide's mother came and gave us her views of the subject, which seemed to begin and end with the conviction that we were "*not* ladies." But, there! I get so indignant and full of uncharitableness whenever I think of what we endured in the days of Adelaide that I am sure it is positively wrong to recall them. Why fan again into flame the smouldering embers of a dead vexation? Let me, after this wide detour, come back to the moment when, free at last from our tormentor, my sister and I breathed deep sighs of relief

We talked the matter over *en famille* that same night.

"Why not try a lady-help?" suggested father. "Surely, whatever be the shortcomings of more cultured women, you would not be annoyed with faults of such a coarse kind as we have lately had to bear with."

"Do you believe in these lady-helps?" questioned Edith. "I mean, is it likely that any real gentlewoman would be willing to take such a situation as ours? I would rather put up with an Irish charwoman than have a mincing 'Miss' Somebody about me, who has only taken to domestic work to escape serving in her father's chandler's shop."

"If she were adapted for serving in the shop and were needed in it, and yet ran away from it," said Keith, "I doubt if she would be of much use anywhere. But we might get a gentlewoman out of a chandler's shop, notwithstanding."

I knew how Keith's democratic ideas always irritated Edith, and tried to anticipate a combative answer from her by saying, "Well, of course, when we say 'a lady' in this case, we only mean a girl of refined manners and decent education. Her parentage matters little if she is able to do what we require of her. Personally, I can honestly say that I should have been thankful to know myself fitted for any kind of honest service by which I might have earned my own independence twelve months ago."

This mollified Edith, who had lately obtained a very nice situation as daily governess to four children, wherein her superior talents and unimpeachable breeding seemed to be fully appreciated, while I remained in the capacity of Cinderella at home. But one of us must be Cinderella under present circumstances. Edith would have found it a terrible trial, but I did not—at least, not worth speaking of, so the arrangement was as good as could be.

"Well, suppose we advertise," said my sister, at length. "The Bertrams did very well, I remember, with their lady parlour-maid; she was a surgeon's daughter, I believe they said; but perhaps he was only a 'vet.'"

"It is important to know which," observed Keith, satirically. "It would make such a difference to the way Mary Jane laid the cloth, wouldn't it?"

"Let us have supper now," I said, "and after that we can think out the advertisement. The deepest depths have surely been reached in Adelaide; it is some comfort to think we can't get anybody worse."

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CHAPTER II.

ENTER—WHO?

HOW shall I describe her—the first applicant who appeared in answer to our advertisement, and the only one whom we interviewed?

Between the hours of six and eight p.m. we had announced ourselves as accessible, and this was of course in order that Edith's judgment as well as mine should be available. The charwoman, in a cap and apron specially provided for the occasion, was retained to answer the door.

She came with a single knock—the applicant, I mean. This was unexpected, but not altogether discouraging. The elaborate rat-tat which had heralded Adelaide's

BRITISH MUSEUM

appearance on the scene was remembered by us both.

"A young—er—person come about the place, Miss," said Mrs. Bell. A "person," by the way, appears to be a sort of compromise between a "lady" and a "woman," neither the one nor the other, but partaking of some of the attributes of both.

"Ask her to walk in," said Edith; and when the stranger entered, I quite understood Mrs. Bell's hesitation, at least from her point of view.

She was of middle height, but so straight that she looked taller. Indeed, straightness struck one at first sight as being her prevailing characteristic; straight nose, straight dark brows, and straight, firm mouth impressed me at a glance, while the straight, frank look she gave us out of a pair of well-opened, intelligent brown eyes went far to render the impression a distinctly favourable one. Her attire was severely, almost aggressively plain. Her dark brown hair, innocent of fringe or frizz, though possessing, I almost enviously observed, a very pretty natural wave of its own, was turned back under a small, neat black bonnet; a black cloth jacket, of by no means the latest cut, over a dark tweed skirt, and taffeta gloves completed her *tout ensemble.*

"You have advertised for a lady-help, I believe," was her introductory remark. Her voice was refined, and her manner singularly direct and simple. It seemed to match her dress and her eyes.

"Yes," said Edith, taking upon herself, by reason of her seniority and undisputedly greater wisdom, the office of spokeswoman. "Have you had experience of a situation of the kind?"

"None whatever," replied the applicant, calmly. "I have never been in a situation of any kind. But I can sweep, scrub, clean grates, cook, wash dishes without smashing them, do windows, boots—anything you like. I believe I'm a lady, and I know I should like to help."

It is an odd thing to say, and how I knew it I can't tell; but I was quite sure, before our visitor ended her brief declaration of ability, that she had observed the rust on our steel fire-irons, the cobweb on the ceiling over the bookcase, and the dust in the corner under the big chair.

"You could give references, of course?" said Edith. "By the way, what is your name?"

"Mary Ray. Yes, I can refer you to the Honourable Mrs. Jonesmith, who has known me from a child. She will also assure you from personal knowledge that I am able to do all that I say."

"I thought you said you had never been in a situation before?" queried Edith.

"I did say so, and I spoke the truth," returned Miss Ray, with a sharpness which showed that Edith's innuendo, whether intended or not, had nettled her. "I did not say I had had no experience of work."

"Are you—may I ask—an orphan?" It was I who put this question. It was the first time I had spoken; and I said it as gently as I could, fearing to touch upon possibly sad remembrances.

Mary Ray faced me with a swift, sweet smile that was quite a surprise. "No," she replied. "My father and mother, I am thankful to say, are both living." And then she flushed to the roots of her hair, for which manifestation I could in no wise account.

"What is your father?" asked Edith, in somewhat inquisitorial tones.

Miss Ray hesitated for a moment, and the flush deepened. "Excuse me," she then said, with a quiet dignity that nothing but sheer impudence could have withstood, "but I cannot see the relevancy of that question to the matter under discussion. Mrs. Jonesmith is ready to vouch for my respectability and capability. If we can agree on other points, is not that enough?"

And Edith thereupon collapsed as I had never seen her collapse at anyone's rebuke before. She virtually retired from the conversation after this, and left me to discuss terms, etc., for we had agreed upon all details beforehand. I seemed, somehow, to get on better with Mary Ray than my sister did. I liked her, and I felt instinctively that she liked me. Once or twice those clear brown eyes of hers seemed full of laughter; but that must have been my fancy, for her manner throughout was particularly business-like and grave.

Well, the end of this interview was that we asked Miss Ray to call again the following evening, after which, not having seen any other candidate for the situation, we wrote to the Honourable Mrs. Jonesmith, and, not to linger unnecessarily over what is, after all, but an introduction to my story, the final result of these preliminaries was that we engaged her.

Edith had her misgivings; she was certainly not so favourably impressed with Mary Ray as I had been. She thought her wanting in frankness—how differently the same thing will affect different people! She believed, she said, there was some mystery about her of which she was ashamed. She feared, too, that she might prove likely at times to forget her position in the house, and presume.

"Not if I am any judge of character," I said. "Why, she actually said she should prefer, if it made no difference to us, to wear an apron and cap like a servant, and be called Mary. That didn't look like forgetting her position."

"That's nothing," said Edith. "But, however, you will have much more to do with her than I shall, and I do trust you at least will be discreet, and bear in mind the difference in your station. I am glad," she added, "that she is going to begin her duties on Wednesday. She will have got into good working order, I hope, by Sunday. I should hate to have that clumsy Mrs. Bell blundering about then."

I knew what she meant, and why she turned away half-shyly as she spoke to rearrange, unnecessarily, the ornaments on the mantelpiece. Keith had invited his great chum, Edric Moore, to dinner on that day. Mr. Moore was cashier in a bank where Keith held a situation as clerk. He was a young man of good family—some connection of Lord Bramley, I believe—and likely to rise into an excellent position. He had taken a great fancy to my brother from the time the latter first entered the bank, and the friendship being mutual, we did not discourage Keith from occasionally inviting him home. These visits had been growing more frequent for the past two months, and as Edith, who is very pretty, with the loveliest complexion and golden hair I ever saw, always seemed to look her best and prettiest when he was present, I was not at all sur-

prised. My father liked Mr. Moore extremely, because he was intelligent and well-read, and free from the conceit which spoils so many clever young men; and having been abroad a good deal, his conversation was more than commonly interesting. He was also really good; but that goes without saying, or he would not have been Keith's friend. He was not ashamed of being interested in Home Mission work, and taught wood-carving to a class of boys one evening a week. So, when Edith took to putting on her daintiest laces, and investing in the extravagance of new ribbons when he was expected, and brightened, unconsciously, into positive radiance at the sound of his voice in the hall, no matter how tired she had been before, I quite understood and sympathised.

On Wednesday, as arranged, Mary Ray entered upon her duties. The way she went about everything from the outset, so quietly and deftly, and with so complete an air of a person who knew what she was undertaking, went far to remove the slight prejudice against her that had formed in my sister's mind.

The first thing she asked for was a written table of each day's work. And as this was an arrangement we had never yet adopted, she and I talked it over and drew one up. At least, she thought of everything that would have to be done, and the best time for doing it, and I, unable to offer any suggestions on the subject, merely acquiesced and wrote it all down.

"An excellent idea," said Edith, when I told her. "I wonder we never thought of it before. I believe she will prove quite a treasure. And how nice and *superior* she looks—such an improvement on any we have had yet." Adding, poor dear, for about the twentieth time, "It is *such* a comfort to have got her here before Sunday!"

(To be continued.)

A PLEA FOR SLEEPY-HEADS.

THE time-honoured notion that early rising makes little folks "healthy, wealthy, and wise," has received a rather severe set-back from some eminent scientists, who declare that the practice of hustling youngsters out of bed at five or six o'clock in the morning is not only unreasonable, but really injurious to their health. It is claimed that growing children and youths need the rest that comes with the morning hours. There are constitutional peculiarities of all sorts, and there are many temperaments that demand sleep at certain hours, and are never at their best without it.

It is a great mistake to prescribe iron-clad regulations, and expect all kinds of persons to shape themselves to them. A few years ago, in a well-to-do family, there was a child about ten years of age, who was irritable, peevish, low-spirited, and evidently out of condition, mentally and physically. On the advice of some medical man a tutor was secured, whose business it was to rouse the boy at five o'clock in the morning and take him out for a walk. Immediately upon the wakening he was required to take a cold bath, then a cup of milk or broth with some light nourishment, and then a long tramp over the hills and through the valleys before the eight o'clock breakfast. This plan was kept up all through the summer and autumn. Contrary to the existing theories, the boy grew worse instead of better, until it became a matter almost of actual force to drag him out of bed and get him ready for his morning outing. He came in blue, cold, spiritless, and in the most vicious condition of temper. So serious did the case become that the parents began to wonder if the poor lad were not developing some subtle form of insanity.

As good fortune would have it, by some accident the youngster had a fall and fractured one of the bones of his leg. This necessitated the counsel of an eminent surgeon, who immediately began to inquire the cause of the abnormal condition in which he found his patient. Without attempting to find fault with what had been done, he enjoined an entirely new method, recommending absolutely undisturbed sleep, very light, simple food whenever the child craved it, a quiet apartment unless the patient desired company, and an abundance of toys, books, and amusements whenever he asked for them. The fracture was a bad one, and, owing to the run-down condition of the boy's system, was a long time healing. Under the new plan, however, he gained in flesh, and a healthy colour took the place of the blue and ill-nourished appearance formerly so noticeable. His ill-temper vanished almost entirely, and he became as happy and manageable as any of the other children of the family.

As soon as he was able to walk, the suggestion of renewing the old morning tramps was made, but this the surgeon positively interdicted, on the plea that the injured limb would not be able to stand the strain for a year or so, at least. He also insisted that the boy should be allowed to remain undisturbed in the morning until such a time as he awoke naturally. The boy himself was the first to discover the difference in his own feelings, and ascribed the true cause. He declared that the early rising and long walks were wearing him out, and that he felt very much better mentally and physically when he was quiet. The old treatment was therefore entirely abandoned, greatly to his advantage in health and spirits.

There are thousands of children who are being trained to death in this way, and who, in pursuance of the old early-rising theory, are being unfitted for future usefulness. By all means give the children all the sleep they want, even though some early morning duties have to go undone. They are laying up strength and vitality for future use, and there is no investment that will yield a greater interest.

WOMEN OF WORTH.

MRS. JOSEPHINE BUTLER AND HER WORK.

BY ISABEL S. ROBSON, AUTHOR OF "THE MOTHER OF GARFIELD," ETC.

FEW names rank higher in the list of women who have made the Victorian era peculiarly one of noble philanthropic labour than that of Mrs. Josephine Butler. For more than a quarter of a century she has thrown herself ardently into all causes which affect the welfare of women, but it is as the leader of the Purity Movement, the soul of the great protest against every form of legalised vice, that her name will go down to posterity. By voice and pen she has ceaselessly laboured to further the cause.

Mrs Butler
Josephine E Butler

Born in a beautiful northern country house, where all was purity, affection, and refinement; wedded to a man of noble and saintly character, the mistress of a happy home, and the mother of three sons and one daughter, the story of Mrs. Butler's girlhood and early married life is in sharp contrast to the stormy years of her after-life. The first crushing sorrow centres about her little Evangeline. The parents had been away from home, and the child, eager to greet them, was seen leaning over the balustrade as they entered the hall-door. A second later, she lost her balance and lay lifeless upon the marble floor at her mother's feet. "I drank the cup of bitterness to the dregs that day," says Mrs. Butler.

She soon after left Cheltenham for Liverpool, flinging herself ardently into work in the slums, hoping in "relieving another's woe, to ease her own." It was about this time she felt a Divine call to the work which has since been so closely associated with her name, and in answering which she has borne unflinchingly misunderstanding, scorn, contumely, social ostracism, public insult, and danger to life and limb.

Once, at Pontefract, she was holding a meeting in a hayloft, only to be reached by a ladder leading through a trap-door. The floor had been strewn with cayenne, to make speaking difficult, but a few buckets of water removed this obstacle; presently there was a smell of burning—someone had fired the bundles of straw, and infuriated faces appeared through the trap-door, and wild threats were uttered against the speaker. Mrs. Butler had only time to dash forward, spring through the trap-door to the ground, and make her escape.

Frequently in strange towns she could obtain no lodgings after the day's labour; landlords feared to shelter her against an angry mob, who threatened to fire any house in which she was harboured.

Perhaps most wounding of all, was to meet, among those from whom sympathy might justly have been expected, the grossest misunderstanding, and a contemptuous surprise "that she should have chosen such a work," coupled with a hint at some sorrow in the background. Those who knew Mrs. Butler felt how little she "chose" the work; rather, she shrank from it, tried to accomplish it by quiet means, beseeching this powerful class and that—in vain. There was nothing to be done but to break up the serenity of her idyllic married life and to go forth herself, almost single-handed, to the battle with legalised wrong. How she was supported all through by her husband, Canon Butler, his biography, written by his widow, abundantly proves. "And to think that they dared to slander *him*," she once said, "when he was the best and truest husband woman ever had! People think when a woman espouses the cause of her sex she has a private grievance to avenge!"

It has been thought that because Mrs. Butler's name is no longer prominent in accounts of philanthropic work, she is taking a well-earned rest. Such is far from being the case. She confesses herself that she is "a little out of English work," having retired from it because there are so many workers here and help is so much needed abroad.

In 1874 the Purity Movement began to extend to the Continent, and Mrs. Butler, being a good linguist, was elected honorary secretary of the foreign branch. Her success has been extraordinary, especially in Switzerland, Belgium, Holland, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. Everywhere she finds the most splendid helpers among working people.

The buffeting of the world has left its traces upon Mrs. Butler—her pale, finely chiselled face is worn and furrowed; yet despite her arduous experiences, she is bright, cheerful, and active, retaining still that strong sense of humour which carried her through many a trying ordeal. "We cannot and ought not to be long unhappy," she says, "when we are doing God's work in the world." Truly, judged by her own standard, Mrs. Butler's life should be one of the happiest.

"To live for others that they may not suffer,
Is the best vote of thanks for our own being."

HOW GIRLS CAN EARN THEIR LIVING.

BY CLEMENTINA BLACK.

I.—INTRODUCTORY.—TEACHING.

THE spectacle offered us in these days by the attitude of young women towards work is rather curious. The sense of the duty of earning one's own living, which is not a duty that has been much preached to girls, has possessed itself of their minds, to the exclusion, their elders sometimes think, of other duties. Roughly speaking, every young girl wishes to earn her own living, while a large proportion of parents are, tacitly or avowedly, opposed to this wish. The same father who neglects nothing in the way of educating his son for business, and seeking out for him the best possible openings, will grudge his daughter the small fee for any special technical class, and feel aggrieved when she seeks out an opening for herself. Parents who take up this line declare themselves, and no doubt believe themselves, to be actuated by their affection and by their superior foresight; but in truth their action is both selfish and short-sighted.

The desire to live one's own life, shaped by one's own choice and dependent on one's own exertions alone, is a legitimate and healthy desire for a girl no less than for a boy; and the young creature in whom it has once become developed can never be thoroughly happy if it is thwarted. Moreover, none of us can be certain of leaving to our daughters an income so assured as to set them beyond the possibility of having to provide for themselves; and there is no position crueller than that of a woman no longer young, who finds herself face to face with the strife of a crowded labour market. She has no special skill, no business training, not even the habit of punctual, regular work, nor the habit of thinking and deciding for herself.

There are hundreds upon hundreds of such women in England, who, after a youth spent amid comfort and consideration, are exposed in middle life to the pangs of severe privation, and to neglect and roughness which they feel perhaps even more acutely. It is not too much to say that nine out of ten of these women are victims of parental short-sightedness.

The true affection is that which realises that a daughter, like a son, is and ought to be an independent human being; and the best possible training is that which develops the highest sense of personal responsibility, and gives freest play to every natural gift of talent or intelligence. There are certain qualities conducive to success in any occupation whatever, and since these are also, fortunately, qualities intrinsically conducive to the happiness of their possessor, it should be a special aim of all early training to cultivate them. First of all stands health; second is the habit of consideration for others; then come accuracy and the power of effective application. A woman of ordinary intelligence, who has acquired these four things, is not likely to fail in any occupation which she may take up; while the more fully she possesses them the fitter will she be to direct a household and to assume the great responsibilities of wife and mother.

In the choice of a calling, as in the choice of a husband, the vital point is the personal inclination of the woman concerned. It is the part of the parent to give the best information, the greatest opportunities of comparison and selection, and to insist, if need be, upon delay and deliberation; but, in the last resort, the wish of the daughter should make the decision. It is hard, very hard, to see the young life, for which we have dreamed one ideal course, turning itself resolutely towards another, which perhaps appears far less desirable. But we elders must remember that our child is not ourself over again, and that the deep-lying preferences of one soul are things not to be controlled by any other soul, however near and dear. Unless we can bring ourselves to say—

"Great Nature is more wise than I,"

we cannot deal justly with these young things who are growing up not into copies of us, but into themselves. It is the sense of receiving fondness, instead of fair play, which rankles in the breast of so many a modern girl, and causes that decay of confidence between parent and child about which we hear so much.

The first and old-fashioned idea which suggests itself, in the case of a woman who is to work for her living, is that she should "take to teaching," and it is not so long since the notion prevailed that any woman was capable of this "taking to," without special training. Nowadays we go a little too far in the other direction, and are inclined to suppose that special training can make any woman a teacher. The truth is that the teacher, like the artist, is both born and made. No training will make a good teacher of a woman who has not the special natural gift of imparting knowledge, nor can the best part of teaching ever be reduced to a "system."

Some of the methods of teaching, however, can be, and should be, learned from the experience of others. Any girl, for instance, who means to be a class teacher ought, at least, to see the class teaching of experienced and successful teachers; and she should also certainly know something of the physiology of children, whose mental state is so much affected by their physical condition. Moreover, it is almost superfluous to say that she must herself know the subjects which she proposes to teach—or, in other words, that if she intends to undertake general teaching she must have a very thorough and very expensive education.

But let her remember always that teaching is a *human relation*, and that no two children are precisely alike, or will be influenced in precisely the same way by her own personality. No thoroughness of acquisition will supply the place of a sympathetic interest in the workings of her pupils' minds; and it is even possible for a generally successful teacher to fail completely with a quite intelligent and willing pupil whose mind happens to be altogether out of tune with her own.

A curious instance of this peculiarity has come before my own notice during the last few months. The child is quick and anxious to learn, the teacher an enthusiast in her profession, and they genuinely like each other; other children learning with the same lady have

progressed most satisfactorily ; this little girl, after weeks of teaching, has acquired absolutely nothing, and was always fagged out after her lessons with the vain effort to learn.

The well-paid posts in high schools and schools of equal standing can generally only be attained by girls who have had a college education and hold high certificates. The problem is how to find occupation for teachers not so well equipped. The lower posts in schools are uncertain, mostly ill-paid, and often very laborious. It would be wiser to stand aside from the struggle for these and seek for some more specialised branch of work. Let me suggest three.

There appears to be some demand for teachers of speech and lip-reading to the so-called deaf and dumb—an occupation which requires patience, accuracy, and of course special training, but not necessarily a knowledge of more than good ordinary English.

Again, the various County and District Councils of the country are employing women as teachers of dress-making, cookery, and sanitation ; and to qualify in any one of these branches requires less time and outlay than the training of the general teacher.

Kindergarten teaching is at the moment extremely fashionable, and any girl who proposes to teach quite young children would do well to know something of the methods ; but I would strongly dissuade her from looking to kindergarten teaching alone as affording an assured livelihood. There appear to be indications that the system is already less popular among parents and among teachers of older children. An opinion seems to be gradually forming that children do not, as a matter of observation, generally acquire in kindergartens the habit of serious application, which should be the very basis of education ; and this opinion must tend to diminish the demand for kindergarten teaching.

One calling there is, closely allied to that of the nursery governess and the kindergarten teacher, which might well and wisely be undertaken by girls who have the gift of dealing with tiny children. This is the calling of children's nurse. At the Norland Institute ladies are trained in the proper management of children, their clothing, feeding, and early training, and are also instructed to some degree in the methods of the kindergarten. Engagements are made through the Institute ; a uniform is worn, the pay is at least as good as that of a nursery governess, meals are not taken with other servants, and no heavy work is required. The position seems to me far more dignified, agreeable, and independent than that of the nursery governess or "companion," and its possibilities of usefulness can hardly be over-estimated.

It need only be added that the addresses of institutions for the oral teaching of deaf mutes, of the various clerks to county councils, and of the Norland Institute can be found in the London or local directory.

MY OLD UMBRELLA.

OLD friend, neglected there you stand
Behind my closet door,
You've really grown too shabby now
To carry any more.
Around your rusty frame the silk
In faded splendour clings,
While many a little genteel darn
To view the sunlight brings.

I need the space you occupy
Within my small domain ;
And yet to throw you out, I think,
Would give me mental pain.
Some sad and pleasant memories
Encircle your gaunt form,
For scores of times you've sheltered me
From sun as well as storm.

Yes, many a tramp, old friend, we've had
In rain and pleasant weather ;
To weddings gay and funerals sad
We've often gone together.
And when with merry friends I've climbed
The mountains—you as prop
Helped me to triumph o'er the rest
By gaining first the top.

When in a crowded car I've gone,
And could not get a seat,
'Twas your crook'd handle held the strap,
And kept me on my feet.
But far above your usefulness,
One memory sweet I see,
'Tis this—'neath your protecting shade
My John proposed to me !

ELSIE HACKLING.

Helps for Busy Housewives.

TO MEND KNIVES.—If any of your knife blades have left their handles, fill the hollow of the latter with very finely-powdered resin, and making the stalk of the blade red-hot, press it into the handle, when it will become firmly fixed. Do not move the knife about until the resin is quite cold. You cannot be too careful with knives. Never allow them to lie about uncleaned, and keep the handles free from grease.

During the Winter, see that your sitting-room is well ventilated. The practice of sitting up till midnight in a hot, close room is very prejudicial to robust health.

Good Coffee.—It should never be forgotten that in order to procure good coffee, the coffee-pot must be scrupulously clean inside. Keep it, then, well scoured, and do not allow it to become tainted.

At Meals.—Where there are young children, small cloths should be placed under their plates as a protection to the table-cloth. Very little ones, if allowed at table, should also be provided with large-sized bibs, not only to save their clothes, but to prevent possible smearing of the snow-white table covering.

Chilblains, like chapped hands and lips, are caused by sluggish circulation. As a preventive, after washing the hands, not only wipe them very dry, but well rub them. Glycerine or vaseline well rubbed in will quickly cure chaps. Apply chilblain liniment or tincture of arnica before chilblains break.

Washing.—A table-spoonful of turpentine boiled with white clothes will greatly aid the whitening process.

ROYAL WORCESTER PORCELAIN.

BY BETHA FARR, AUTHOR OF "A PRACTICAL LESSON," ETC., ETC.

Throwing and Turning Room.

IF, as the poet sings, "A thing of beauty is a joy for ever," then Royal Worcester porcelain may well exemplify his belief. One can scarcely imagine more beautiful specimens of the potter's art. For myself, I regard the ware with pride as a production of my native city.

Paying a visit to the works at Worcester, the first room entered is the spacious showroom, with its store of elegantly-moulded shapes, exquisite of texture, perfect in finish, bewildering in beauty and variety of decoration.

A Group of Royal Worcester Porcelain.

From the showroom we pass to the mill, where the materials for making the china-clay and glazes are ground in a certain quantity of water. The period of grinding is from twelve hours to six days. The "slip," or liquid clay, has to be sufficiently fine to pass through strainers of silk lawn having about four thousand meshes to the square inch.

Leaving the mill, we go to the thrower's room, where, upon the potter's wheel, the workman throws a lump of clay, and forms the cups and bowls by the aid of his thumb, afterwards pressing them into a mould; the cup is then passed to the turner, who places it on his lathe, and finishes the edge and foot, and passes it on to the handler, who fixes on the handle with liquid clay. Plates and dishes are made by flat pressing-on moulds. Figures are cast in moulds, the model being cut up into as many as twenty or thirty parts, each cast in a separate mould; the parts are afterwards joined with "slip."

We next visit the kiln. The porcelain is placed in cases of fire-clay of various shapes and sizes, called "seggars," to preserve it from the smoke. Each seggar has in it a carefully prepared bed of ground flint; cups stand on china rings in the seggar to keep them straight. A china oven takes forty hours to fire, and about forty-eight to cool. The "biscuit" ware, as it is styled, is then taken into the dipping-room to be glazed; it then goes into the drying stove, and the gloss oven.

After this we are taken to the painting and gilding room. Between each wash-in of colour the ware is burnt. The gilding is done with the purest gold that can be obtained; all the elaborate patterns are traced by hand. Visitors are disappointed to see that the gold in use is of a dark brown colour; it has to pass through the enamel kiln and the burnishing room before its beauty is revealed. The burnishing is done by women, who rub the gold with bloodstone or agate. For patterns on gold a fine burnishing point of agate is used to trace out the pattern, leaving the ground of dead gold.

Transfer printing was used in the decoration of porcelain first in Worcester—not the ordinary transfer printing of an entire pattern of blue or red, as in Chinese ware. The printing is used to give the outlines of the patterns, birds, flowers, foliage, etc.; the filling-in of the colours is done by hand, chiefly by female artists. It would take a keen eye to detect a difference between the filled-in transfer and the true hand-painted decoration. We are told that an ordinary piece of ware passes through at least eighteen different hands.

Finally, the visitor is conducted to the museum, and is shown a fine collection of Worcester porcelain of different periods, ranging from 1751 to the present time.

As a concluding word, it may be mentioned that the greatest care is exercised in the factory to ensure healthful conditions of labour, and one needs only to watch the workers as they file out at the gates, to see that employers and employed are on the best of terms.

Pressing Room.

BABY'S FIRST NEW YEAR.

WINDS are at war; the voice of the storm
Wails like the ghost of the old dead year;
But my Baby's nursery is bright and warm,
And my Baby's heart is without a fear.
"A happy New Year to you, Eyes of blue!"
'Tis the very first that has dawned on you.

What will the new year bring to us, Sweet?
Who can prophesy what shall be?
Strength to run, to those little feet?
Words to lisp, and the world to see?
Thank Heaven, I may trust this year that is new,
To the old year's God who gave me you.

M. E. R.

PERILS BY FIRE.

BY MRS. RICHMOND, AUTHOR OF "THE CHILDREN'S SUNDAY," ETC.

AMONGST the many preventible ills from which we suffer, burns and scalds are responsible for much mortality (especially amongst children); and the dangers by which we are daily surrounded from our open grates and lighting arrangements should receive the earnest consideration of us all. A rarer, but still too common danger arises from the accidental burning of the house; and under these three heads may be classed most of our perils by fire.

From the time a young child is able to crawl, the open grate becomes a danger to him; and the obvious remedy is to have a large guard surrounding the nursery fireplace. But in the kitchen, or in the ordinary sitting-room, this is not always convenient; cooking must be attended to, and elders do not care to have a guard between them and the fire, so that, even in well-managed households, the guard cannot be constantly in use.

Later on, when the child is older, the fire-guard is probably placed entirely on one side, although many serious burns arise from a child (usually a little girl) reaching over the grate to take something from the mantelpiece. Or the kettle falls, or even boils over; the little child is too near it, and the effects of a scald are terrible. Another common danger arises from the boiling water in the tea-pot. A tiny mite is attracted by the cheerful tinkle of the tea-cups, and then by the sight of the steaming tea-pot; and when mother's back is turned, up go the little hands to seize the deadly danger. Alas! for the poor baby's throat and chest if those hands are not stopped in time.

But what can be done? We cannot do without tea, and children cannot be always in the nursery.

Two simple practical recommendations may be made; and these, if carried out in every home, would save many young lives. The first is with regard to children's dresses; they should *be entirely clothed in woollen materials*, which will not easily burn.

But the danger of scalds remains, though it is minimised by thicker woollen clothing which protects the skin. Everyone, therefore, who has to do with children should explain to them the terrible nature of the danger which exists in touching any vessel containing hot water, and insist upon their perfect obedience of the injunction to leave them, as well as fires, candles, and lamps, absolutely untouched. But before children are old enough to understand these perils it is well to arrange for them some perfectly safe place in which the baby of two or three may be placed when the mother or nurse is obliged to leave the room for a minute.

A cot (with railings high enough to prevent the child from falling over) is useful in this way for very little children; but for older children it is well to put a guard round the fireplace, and remove all scalding water quite out of their reach before leaving the room, giving them something to do at the same time (or to play at), for idleness is at the root of much mischief.

Candles or lamps, when used in a nursery, should have their special safe place, out of reach of the children, such as a stout bracket on the wall; or else a hanging lamp, well above their heads, can be arranged. Gas jets, if placed on either side of the fireplace, are very tempting to thoughtless children. Gas, moreover, is highly injurious to the health and eyesight of young people, and is best dispensed with, if possible, in the rooms which they inhabit; but if this is impracticable, let the gaselier be a hanging one, out of their reach, and keep the top window constantly open, to allow of the escape of all poisonous fumes.

But the most common of all perils by fire, arises from the breakage or fall of the mineral-oil lamps now in general use.

In purchasing these lamps, it would be well if none were procured without metal reservoirs for the oil, and the simple plan now patented to put out the light instantly if the lamp should fall over. Glass or china reservoirs (sure to be broken sooner or later) are highly dangerous, for the oil, spilled when alight, spreads with great rapidity, and may be responsible for much damage.

Wherever mineral-oil is used, there should be a small store of dry sand or soil, to throw over the burning furniture or carpet, directly it is alight; for water only aggravates the evil, the burning oil floating about on the top of it, so that the house is soon seriously endangered. But dry sand (six pounds of silver-sand from the grocer's will be excellent material) thrown quickly over the burning oil will absorb it, and put out the flame at once. A jar of this simple remedy should be in every household, each member being instructed where to find it, and how to use it without loss of time.

But more obscure causes, such as a wooden rafter crossing a chimney, are sometimes answerable for a burning house, and the household may be, perhaps, cut off from escape by the stairs or doorways.

What can be done at such a moment? Presence of mind will prevent the further danger often incurred by hurried and thoughtless action, such as jumping instantly from a window at a dangerous height from the ground. If no help be forthcoming (from fire-escapes and engines) all the mattresses, cushions, clothing, or anything soft, should be flung first from the window, and then four of the tallest and strongest men amongst the spectators (who quickly assemble on these occasions) should hold up a large blanket or coverlid (well grasped at the corners) over the heap of bedding, into which those in deadly danger by fire may lower themselves, thus breaking the fall, and preventing the serious injuries which are too often incurred through frightened and frantic haste to escape.

If these possible perils are calmly thought over beforehand, the mind will naturally recur to the subject when the danger arrives; and a few calm directions, given even from the window of a burning house, may save many lives. Should it be possible to escape by passing a burning staircase, thick woollen clothing,

covered by a blanket (which should envelop the head), will enable an active person to rush through a dangerous place without serious injury; the feet, however, must be incased in boots or woollen shoes, if possible, and no time lost in making the attempt.

It is also sometimes possible to lower oneself, hand over hand, by means of a strongly-knotted series of blankets or sheets, hanging out of a window, and securely tied to the bed-post, which can be dragged to the window for the purpose. But it is well to throw out beds and mattresses before descending (in case of a knot giving way, or a hand slipping); also, if possible, to have the help of a blanket held out by the corners, as before suggested.

An active man will climb such a rope of blankets, etc., from the ground, and rescue children or old people who could not go down it safely. Quick, strong knotting is necessary, and if the bedding does not give sufficient materials, stout coats or dresses may be added at the lower end (where a breakage is of less account than near the top), and the knot which fixes the ladder of bedding to the bedstead, or other strong article of furniture, must be a thoroughly strong one, which will not slip. A little practice in tying various knots is an excellent amusement for a quiet evening.

Presence of mind and resourcefulness may be inculcated even in young children, who should be taught to consider and face unknown dangers, so that if suddenly called upon to act in more mature years they may know what to do, and, with God's help, do it.

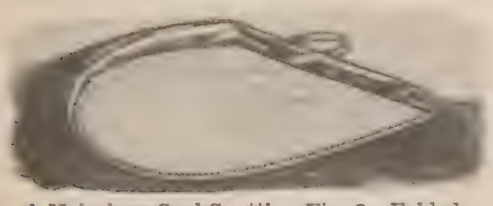
NOVEL NOTIONS.

UNDER this title we propose to bring before the notice of our readers, month by month, various ingenious domestic appliances for saving labour, or for adding to the comfort and well-being of home. Any readers wishing for fuller information than it is possible for us to give in the magazine concerning any of the articles mentioned on this page are invited to communicate with the Editor of THE MOTHERS' COMPANION, at 9, Paternoster Row, London, E.C., enclosing a stamped envelope; and every effort will be made to supply further particulars required.

A Noiseless Coal-Scuttle. Fig. 1. In Use.

A NOISELESS COAL-SCUTTLE.

The harsh grating of the metal scoop on a metal coal-scuttle is often irritating and disagreeable to invalids, or persons of delicate nerves, and hence the scuttle which we illustrate will be found useful. It is made of leather and lined with cloth, and is capable of folding up when not full of coals. The scoop is also covered with a material which diminishes the grating of the coals upon it, and the utensil is both light and portable.



A Noiseless Coal-Scuttle. Fig. 2. Folded.

"FLOORINE."

Staining floors and other woodwork about a house is a piece of work that must often be done at home. For this, a new series of stains, known as "Floorine," has lately been introduced, by means of which the whole work can be effected at a single operation. The stains are made in various shades, and seem to give an excellent result when carefully applied.

A NEW TAP.

The "Silver Wing" tap is a new contrivance for drawing off aërated waters, glass by glass, without leaving the rest of the contents of the bottle exposed to the air. The tap is plated inside and out, and is fitted with a screw shank that pierces the cork like a corkscrew. In sound corks this little device should act well.

AN AUTOMATIC TEA-CANISTER

has just been patented. It is fitted with two lids, large and small. The large one is only used for filling the canister, and the tea or coffee is removed by the smaller opening, which is so contrived that only the quantity actually removed is exposed to the air.

A NEW IRONING MACHINE.

A simple machine for ironing linen and giving it a good gloss in half the time required for handwork is shown in our illustration. An adjustable spring bears on the iron, which can be heated by gas or a stove, and the laundress has only to move it about where she wishes. The pressure on the linen is adjusted by means of the spring.

SHALL BABY MIND?

BY EVA J. MARSDEN.

WHEN shall I begin to discipline my child? is a question which every mother ought to ask. If I say it is hardly possible to begin too early, many will be surprised, if not incredulous.

"I never punished a child before it was two years old," said a dear old lady to me when my first baby lay in my arms.

"I don't intend to punish at all," I replied; for, like most inexperienced persons, I had fine theories in regard to bringing up children.

"I hope you won't need to; but 'In Adam's fall we sinned all,' you know," she said, with a hearty laugh; thinking, no doubt, that a few years would teach me many things.

While my baby was "in arms" my theories were delightful; but with creeping, trouble began. The things that he ought not to touch were the only attractive ones, and most fascinating of all was the bookcase. Nothing delighted him more than to tug away till the books tumbled out on the floor. Persuasion and argument were of no avail. "No, no," and "Baby naughty," were greeted with bright smiles or utter indifference. I began to fear that the child knew he was not doing right, and that this knowledge added an element of mischievous pleasure. But what was to be done? I taxed my ingenuity, but I could not keep my child away from the books. Must I give up to a baby of a few months? I asked myself, ashamed that my theories had failed in the crucial test.

Suddenly common-sense came to the rescue. A dozen times had I carried the little rogue away from the scene of conflict, only to see him creep back with all speed at the first opportunity. Then, deliberately, I threw my theories to the winds, and gave the dear chubby little hand a smart slap. Such a look of surprise and distress! It nearly broke my heart. Then a change came over the face, and with a defiant look that said "I will," again he attacked the books. Again I slapped the hand; then I took the sobbing baby on my knee, talked with and quieted him.

When I put him down this time the books were safe; he would not touch them.

The victory is won, I thought with a sigh, for my battle with baby had been a trial.

It was a relief to conquer, but the method was a hard one. Then I remembered that our Heavenly Father teaches obedience in ways quite as hard to us as this had been to my child, and I was comforted.

Whenever after that my baby crept to the books, a decided "No" or at most "Mamma punish," was sufficient to keep him out of mischief.

The battle had to be fought again in regard to other things—the poker and tongs, the album, the piano; but in the course of six weeks I felt safe to take my baby anywhere. In the midst of costly bric-a-brac I had no fear, for my child had learned the grand lesson of obedience.

"How do you manage?" a friend asked me, as we were preparing to leave her house after a two days' visit. "Much as I wanted to see you, I will confess that I hesitated when I thought of the child. My cousin's little boy was here a week, and I couldn't tell you how many things he ruined."

"Has your cousin ever punished her child?" I asked.

"Oh, no! Why, he isn't three years old yet!"

I smiled, and did not wonder at her troubles.

There may be some mothers who can spare the rod without spoiling the child; there may be some children more easily influenced than mine. But for the majority, I do believe some punishment is necessary, and the earlier a mother begins, the less of it she will have to do. "Wait until the child can understand," I was told over and over again. Ah! but who can tell how early a child may understand the difference between right and wrong? Experience has taught me that if a baby learns to mind before he learns to walk, by the time he is two years old he will have settled into a habit of minding, when punishment will rarely be necessary.

In these days of ungoverned children—dreaded by friends and relatives alike—every mother should insist on obedience, at whatever cost to her own feelings. Make no unnecessary prohibitions. Make every effort to prevent disobedience. Divert the attention. Be sometimes deaf and blind to little unintentional misdemeanours. Punish sparingly; but when it is really necessary, never neglect it. How can we expect our children to obey the commands of God if we do not teach them obedience?

Children rarely love those who spoil them, and never trust them. Their keen young sense detects the false note in the character and draws its own conclusions, which are generally just.—*Hopkinson Smith.*

* * * *

Life to be Well Lived.—In the private journal of a lady, recently deceased, were found these words, "I expect to pass through this world but once. Any good thing, therefore, that I can do, or any kindness I can show to any fellow creature, let me do it *now*. Let me not defer or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again."

* * * *

A Rare Gift.—The power to make beautiful souls is a rare gift—it constitutes the genius of motherhood. Nothing but that privilege and duty would have constituted woman what she is at her best—a creator. It is our true ambition. I do not lack sympathy for those who have inherited such biases or weaknesses as disqualify them from being noble mothers; but such persons should not become wives. They have no right to assume an office they cannot fill. G.

* * * *

Some Boys cannot be satisfied to spend a whole evening in reading; these must be provided for in another way. Let them have games—there are many innocent ones—and let them invite their friends to the house, and feel that they have a share in the home. I used to let my boys make toffee, carpenter, and do all kinds of things in the evening in spite of the litter caused, and I never regretted it. N. H.

MRS. HALLAWAY'S MAID-SERVANT.

BY EDITH C. KENYON, AUTHOR OF "FOR RICHER, FOR POORER," ETC.

"THE servant question is becoming a more perplexing one every day."

"In what way do you mean, Mrs. Jenkinson?"

"Well, good servants are so difficult to find—indeed, it is almost impossible to get one. Nowadays they are all so selfish and unreliable, and so utterly regardless of their employers' interests.

"Perhaps the treatment which servants meet with in these days is different from what it used to be," suggested Mrs. Hallaway, gently.

"Treatment!" cried the other lady, who was calling upon Mrs. Hallaway. "Well, really, I think servants have more privileges—evenings out, and all that sort of thing—than they ever had before. But I cannot expect you to look at the matter as I do. You have such an exceptionally good maid-servant. What an age you have had her!"

"Yes, Hannah has been twelve years with me. But she is leaving now, this week—in fact, she is going to be married."

"Dear me, what a loss! I do pity you, I am sure! You will find it difficult to replace her. Twelve years! Why, I am sure in twelve years I have had at least fifteen—no, sixteen servants. You look shocked. Well, it wasn't my fault. They do such things. Of course, one has to dismiss a servant for flagrant sins, such as drunkenness, theft, impertinence, and so on."

"Circumstances sometimes alter cases," said Mrs. Hallaway. "Sometimes merciful forgiveness of even a flagrant sin brings a rich reward."

"Well, I wouldn't keep a servant in the house twenty-four hours after she had once given way to a flagrant sin."

Mrs. Hallaway was silent a moment or two, then she said, "I think I will tell you *in confidence* a touching incident."

"I shall respect your confidence."

"Thanks. Well, you know what a thoroughly good woman and what a faithful servant my maid Hannah is. Why, if it were not for her I really think I should not be here to-day. She has nursed me through the most terrible illnesses, and has been like a mother to my little ones when I was laid aside. But I nearly lost her once. When I married and first began housekeeping I thought I would be very methodical and do everything by rule, making laws for my little realm which were never on any account to be broken. One rule was that I would always pay my servant half-yearly, and *never* at any other time. Hannah had sixteen pounds a year, which was accordingly paid her half-yearly upon certain days. Just before the end of the fourth half-year she came to me entreating, with tears, that I would at once pay her the half-year's wage which was due in a week. 'Certainly not,' I said indignantly, 'I cannot think of doing any such thing.'

"The girl went away looking cowed, and crying as if her heart would break. But I foolishly was proud of my firmness. Three days afterwards I received a letter from Lady Mary Leek, saying that she was

"She burst out crying, 'Please, ma'am, forgive me!'" p. 14.

going to drive over to have a cup of afternoon tea with me. I was pleased, and thought it would be a good opportunity of using my beautiful solid silver tea-service, and so I went to get it out of my safe. This safe was a secret cupboard in the wall of my bedroom, behind some oak panelling—one panel was made to open like a door. Well, I opened it and took out my service—at least, I took out part of it, for I discovered, to my consternation, that the teapot was missing. Who could have taken it? No one else knew how to open the safe but Hannah. I therefore called her. She came running into the room, and at the sight of me standing by the open safe, burst out crying, and instantly fell upon her knees, sobbing out, 'Please, ma'am, forgive me! Oh, please, ma'am, forgive me!' with the tears raining down her face. 'I have only borrowed it, I have only borrowed it. Next week you shall have it back. Next week, ma'am, as soon as ever I get my wages.'

"'But I must have it now, this minute,'" I cried.

"'Oh, please, ma'am,' cried Hannah, 'I cannot get it until you pay my wages.' And then she made her miserable confession. When she asked for her wages three days before, she was in the utmost need of money. She was engaged to a respectable young man, and he, in a sudden fit of anger, had enlisted for a soldier. He bitterly repented having done so, and he sent word to Hannah to purchase his discharge. In her distress, the idea came to her to borrow my costly teapot, and raise part of the money she required upon that. So she yielded to the temptation, pawned the teapot, receiving four pounds for it, and with the money bought her lover's discharge.

"'Oh, don't send me to prison,' she cried, in conclusion. 'Let me have my wages, and I will run and get you the teapot.'"

"Well," cried Mrs. Jenkinson, "to pawn her mistress's plate! What could be worse? You would feel you ought to make an example of her."

"I did," said Mrs. Hallaway, gently. "I reflected that this was a crime—a first crime. If I sent Hannah to prison for it, her whole life would be blighted. And yet I was very angry, quite too angry to be able to speak.

"Then other thoughts came to me. After all, when the girl took the plate, she was almost distraught with grief about her lover. She had served me well for two years, and I had been most unkind in not yielding to her request about the wages being paid a few days before the time. I therefore gave her four pounds, and she hastened off with the money, and presently returned with my teapot, which was no worse for the unwonted use that had been made of it. And Hannah was so grateful and so full of love to me for having saved her from the bitter consequences of that one false step, that ever after, for ten years, she served me well and faithfully, repaying me a thousandfold."

"Well," said Mrs. Jenkinson, rising, "all is well that ends well. But few would have done as you did."

"And few have such a servant as Hannah has been to me. After all, Mrs. Jenkinson, we should remember that servants have the same human nature, the same weaknesses, and the same passions as ourselves, and——"

"Yes," interrupted the other, "I know what you would say, and I am half tempted to try your plan; I have tried my own on a great many servants without any success at all. I begin to think you may be right."

The next month Hannah was married to her lover, for whose sake she had once almost ruined her whole future career, and to whom she had been engaged for eleven years. Mrs. Hallaway gave the wedding breakfast and a pretty china tea-service to the happy couple, and all went merrily as a marriage bell.

MOTHERS IN COUNCIL.

CONDUCTED BY MRS. E. M. WATERWORTH, AUTHOR OF "MOTHERS AT HOME," ETC.

January 1st, 1896.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,—The king is dead! Long live the king! Surely you will imagine I have gone mad at last, and will be wondering as you read, which letter it was that proved to be the last straw on this poor camel's back.

But I am not mad, and I repeat again, and expect you all to join with me in the last sigh of regret over the lost year—"The king is dead." We get to love the years as they come, and although some of them may seem to rule us with the rod of a tyrant, rather than with the golden thread of love, yet we feel that we would willingly keep them with us just a little longer.

But it may not be—"The king is dead." The year has gone now, and we are left regretting that we did not make better use of it.

Where are all those good resolutions? Where are all those promises to God and to our neighbour? Promises of love, of gentleness, of patience. Alas! alas! that they should be still unfulfilled.

What are we to do? Stand weeping over the pages of the past, that our tears may wash out the many mistakes?

No, no, "The king is dead." Dry up your tears, commit the past into the safe keeping of the God who loves to show mercy rather than wrath, and turn over the new page in life's copy-book.

"Long live the king," the new-born king, young 1896! May God help us all to follow Him more closely each day, and to keep this new page as clear as may be from wilful mistakes. And the way to do that, you know, will be to keep our eyes very closely fixed on our Guide and Pattern, Jesus Christ.

* * * *

I suppose everyone starts the New Year with some fresh plan, good, bad, or indifferent; and I don't see why we should not do the same. So here is my new plan, which, of course, I think a very fine one indeed, and I hope you will all agree with me in admiring it. All through the past year I have been puzzling what brains I possess to supply the answers in this column. Now, I mean to begin the new year in a *striking* way.

I will no longer settle all the matters myself. Will you help me? Of course you will, I know that well enough; and so I am going to start a Puzzle Paragraph (you will find it down below). In that it is my intention each month to put one of the most difficult questions I have received, and I want you all to help me answer it. You can write on postcards, or on a sheet of note-paper; and, of course, you need not enclose a stamped, directed envelope. The best answer will be published in this column, and a book valued at half-a-crown may be chosen by the writer from Messrs. S. W. Partridge and Co.'s catalogue, and will be sent to her.

Please take notice, though, that all *letters of enquiry* must be addressed to me, as usual, at 9, Paternoster Row, and must be accompanied by a stamped, directed envelope. Now for—

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OUR PUZZLE PARAGRAPH.

"MRS. BROWN" tells me that she has just moved into a house containing kitchen, two sitting-rooms, and four bedrooms. She keeps a good general servant and does the cooking herself. How should she arrange the work so that the house may be kept in apple-pie order (Mrs. B. is evidently very particular) and the maid be dressed by three o'clock?

Answers to this question should be addressed to me with "Puzzle Paragraph" written plainly on the outside of the envelope; and should reach 9, Paternoster Row, London, E.C., not later than the 15th of this month. A book worth half-a-crown may be chosen by the writer of the best answer, which will in due course be published.

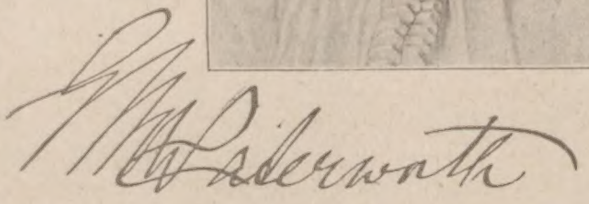
* * * *

"SIMPLE SUSAN" would like to know what kind of short blinds I advise for her new house. Shortly, dear Susan, *no* short blinds! I hate them. Is it not enough that the builder should condemn us to live in houses so much alike that one can hardly tell "t'other from which" one's self, without our doing our utmost to make them all exactly alike with those endless short blinds? Take my advice, and have long curtains instead. They cost a little more at the first outset, but that is all, and they are not for ever awry and out of gear as the short blinds are. Get some butter muslin and some ball fringe, and drape all your front windows with long curtains, and see if your house does not look pretty. As to washing them, that's easy enough. Plenty of soap and plenty of water; no rubbing, and very little starching; plenty of pins, and no ironing. Pin the curtains out on the carpet, or on the bed, till they are dry.

* * * *

I wonder whether "MRS. NASH" followed my advice about the screens. I have read her letter several times, and think she must be one of the best wives and mothers as well as managers. Those three qualities don't by any means always go together, you know; but when they do, they make a little trinity of virtues that is bound to shed happiness around. Defend me from the woman who is a splendid manager—and nothing more. Do I prefer the one who is a splendid wife and mother—and nothing more? Well, I don't feel inclined to be put in the witness-box just now, so I'll reply as a small friend of mine did when she was asked whether she'd have pudding or tart—"I'd like a little of boff, please."

There I am, chattering again, and quite forgetting that of course you are all wanting to know what made me praise Mrs. N. She wanted to make her home pretty, and wrote to ask how to make a screen to hide the empty kitchen grate. One of the prettiest screens I know can be made by first gumming ferns, or wild flowers, poppies and daisies for instance, on a piece of glass, and putting another thin sheet of glass over them. This makes a very nice screen for windows too, if put on the lower panes which face the road. Christmas cards can be used also for inside the room. An old clothes-horse covered with Turkey twill, or with American cloth, and then beautified with scraps or cards, or coloured pictures arranged with taste, makes a splendid screen against draughts for the cold weather.



*** Our readers will doubtless be glad to see the accompanying portrait of the President of our Mothers' Council, Mrs. E. M. Waterworth.

A LITTLE HAND.

A LITTLE hand so softly stole
Into my own one day,
When I needed the touch that I loved so much
To strengthen me on the way.

Softer it seemed than the softest down
On the breast of the gentlest dove;
But its timid press and its faint caress
Were strong in the strength of love!

It seemed to say in a strange, sweet way:
"I love you and understand;"
And calmed my fears as my hot, heart tears
Fell over that little hand.

Perhaps there are tenderer, sweeter things
To be found in this sun-bright land;
But I thank the Lord for His blessings all,
And the clasp of a little hand.

HINTS ON HOME DRESSMAKING.

BY A PRACTICAL DRESSMAKER.

CAPES continue to be much worn during the winter season. They are still cut on the circular principle, but the back is made to fit well into the figure, and the fronts are often cut with scarf ends. The Inverness cape will, it is said, be much worn by ladies. It is cut exactly like those worn by gentlemen and boys, only the front capes are lined with silk, and the back is finished with a full hood, arranged so as to allow of its being easily drawn over the head when desired.

Fig. 1.

Some cosy, half-fitting jackets are made on a yoke, double-breasted, with small revers. The saque coat is more used by elderly ladies than younger ones.

The favourite cloth for mantles and jackets is the reversible. It saves lining, and the inner checked side can be used as a trimming composed of revers, neck-band, or hood, as the garment may require. Mantle cloth colours are dark fawn, brown, and green, many of them in mixed heather shades.

Tailor-made dresses have revers, or lapels, or some flat trimming, while those most used have a half-wide open jacket front, and close-fitting back finished off with a very short circular basque, the top of the shoulder being cut in long or short epaulette points. The sleeve used with this jacket is sewn to an under blouse, and is often of a different material and hue from the other part of the dress, as is also the collar and fichu or plastron front.

The godet skirt is certainly that which will be most used during this season. It is cut with back and front widths, and two gores on either side. In order to make this skirt fit well, it is almost necessary to have an interlining of book muslin, Victoria lawn, or French canvas. Crinolette is sometimes used, but it is most inconvenient for all practical purposes, being heavy and also apt to cut through the material.

Fig. 2.

Many neat-looking hats in felt of dark colours are being shown, trimmed simply with tasty bows.

Fig. 1. We have here a lady's mantle of the circular order and of three-quarter length. The shape is suitable for silk plush, velvet, or cloth. If reversible cloth is used the edge can be turned up and faced with a Prussian binding. The shoulder cape in our illustration is of fur, which comes down in narrow ends to the bottom of the cape in front. This is a warm, comfortable finish for this season of the year, but could be made in cloth, velvet, or plush if either of these materials are preferred to fur, which is rather expensive.

Fig. 2. This illustration shows a young lady's cape, which can be used with or without the underskirt. It is of a fashionable cut, having a full piece over the sleeve, which gives ample room for the same. The front is double-breasted, while the back is drawn in with a band at the waist, and the neck is finished with a turned-down collar trimmed with velvet. Under this the hood is set on. The skirt is cut in gores and laid in pleats at the back, being set into a band at the waist.

Fig. 3.

Fig. 3. We illustrate here two little children's dresses. "A" is for a child of about six years, and is made in blouse style with a shoulder cape set on below the yoke; this is edged with a fur trimming, which is very durable and not very expensive, and above this the yoke is braided. Yoke and collar are of plain velvet, which will be covered with a deep cream lace set in at the neck.

"B" is a fancy dress for a child between the age of one and two years, and can be made with mull muslin or washing silk. The material is set on to the yoke in box-pleats, and is finished off at the bottom with two frills of lace or muslin embroidery, or one of each can be used. The shoulder frills are of corresponding material, with a narrower piece for the neck.

Flat Patterns can be supplied. Figs. 1, 2, and 3, price 6½d. each, post free. Address, "M.C. Pattern," 9, Paternoster Row, London, E.C.